

THE
WORKS
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
L O R D B Y R O N.

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LORD BISHOP OF

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THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

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VOL. V.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH—PARISINA—POEMS.

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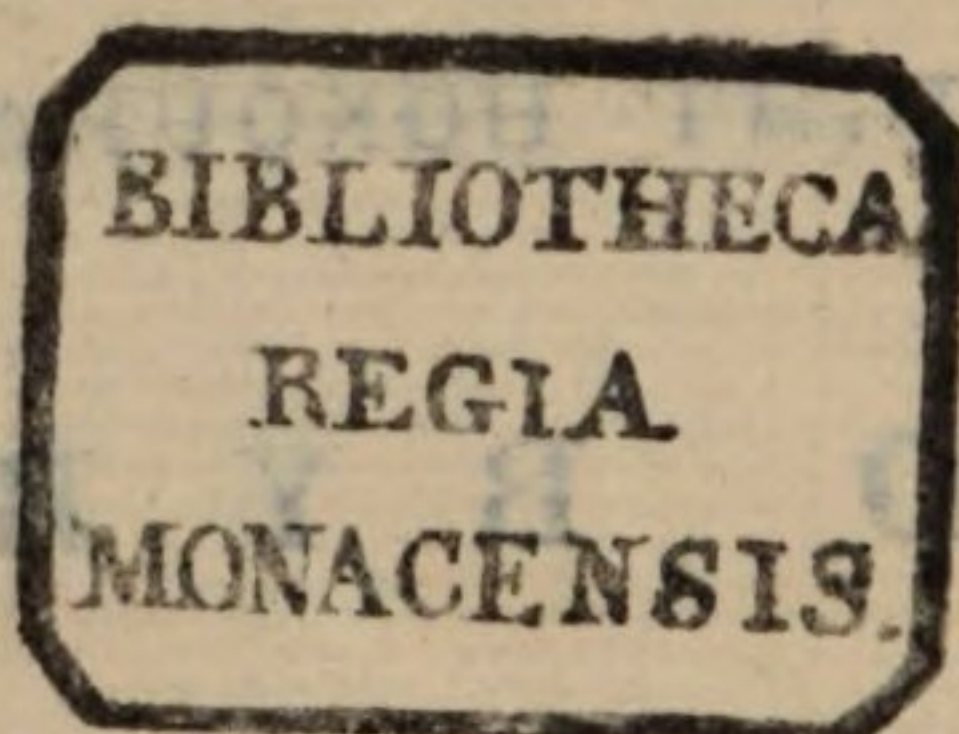
PRINTED FOR GERARD FLEISCHER THE YOUNGER.

1818.

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WORKS

OF



VOL. V.

THE SIEGE OF CONSTANTINOPLE—1807.

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PRINTED FOR GERHARD FLEISCHER, THE BOOKSELLER.

1812.

THE SIEGE OF CORINTH.

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To
JOHN HOBHOUSE, Esq.

THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS

FRIEND.

Jan. 22, 1816.

TO

JOHN HOBBS, Esq.

THIS BOOK IS RESERVED

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OF THE

ADVERTISEMENT.

“THE grand army of the Turks (in 1715), under
“the Prime Vizier, to open to themselves a way
“into the heart of the Morea, and to form the
“siege of Napoli di Romania, the most consider-
“able place in all that country,*) thought it best

*) Napoli di Romania is not now the most considerable place in the Morea, but Tripolitza, where the Pacha resides, and maintains his government. Napoli is near Argos. I visited all three in 1810 — 11; and in the course of journeying through the country from my first arrival in 1809, I crossed the Isthmus eight times in my way from Attica to the Morea, over the mountains, or in the other direction, when passing from the Gulf of Athens to that of Lepanto. Both the routes are picturesque and beautiful, though very different: that by sea has more sameness, but the voyage being always within sight of land, and often very near it, presents many attractive views of the islands Salamis, Aegina, Poro etc., and the coast of the continent.

ADVERTISEMENT.

“in the first place to attack Corinth, upon which
“they made several storms. The garrison being
“weakened, and the governor seeing it was im-
“possible to hold out against so mighty a force,
“thought fit to beat a parley: but while they
“were treating about the articles, one of the
“magazines in the Turkish camp, wherein they
“had six hundred barrels of powder, blew up by
“accident, whereby six or seven hundred men
“were killed: which so enraged the infidels, that
“they would not grant any capitulation, but
“stormed the place with so much fury, that they
“took it, and put most of the garrison, with
“Signor Minotti, the governor, to the sword.
“The rest, with Antonio Bembo, proveditor ex-
“traordinary, were made prisoners of war.” —

History of the Turks, vol. III. p. 151.

THE
SIEGE OF CORINTH.

I.

MANY a vanished year and age,
And tempest's breath, and battle's rage,
Have swept o'er Corinth; yet she stands
A fortress formed to Freedom's hands.
The whirlwind's wrath, the earthquake's shock, 5
Have left untouched her hoary rock,
The keystone of a land, which still,
Though fall'n, looks proudly on that hill,
'The land-mark to the double tide
That purpling rolls on either side, 10
As if their waters chafed to meet,
Yet pause and crouch beneath her feet.
But could the blood before her shed
Since first Timoleon's brother bled,
Or baffled Persia's despot fled, 15

Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine ocean would o'erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below:
Or could the bones of all the slain, 20
Who perished there, be piled again,
That rival pyramid would rise
More mountain-like, through those clear skies,
Than yon tower-capt Acropolis
Which seems the very clouds to kiss, 25

II.

On dun Cithaeron's ridge appears
The gleam of twice ten thousand spears;
And downward to the Isthmian plain
From shore to shore of either main,
The tent is pitched, the crescent shines 30
Along the Moslem's leaguering lines;
And the dusk Spahi's bands advance
Beneath each bearded pasha's glance;
And far and wide as eye can reach
The turbaned cohorts throng the beach; 35
And there the Arab's camel kneels,
And there his steed the Tartar wheels;
The Turcoman hath left his herd,¹
The sabre round his loins to gird;

And there the volleying thunders pour, 40
Till waves grow smoother to the roar.
The trench is dug, the cannon's breath
Wings the far hissing globe of death;
Fast whirl the fragments from the wall,
Which crumbles with the ponderous ball; 45
And from that wall the foe replies,
O'er dusty plain and smoky skies,
With fires that answer fast and well
The summons of the Infidel.

III.

But near and nearest to the wall 50
Of those who wish and work its fall,
With deeper skill in war's black art
Than Othman's sons, and high of heart
As any chief that ever stood
Triumphant in the fields of blood; 55
From post to post, and deed to deed,
Fast spurring on his reeking steed,
Where sallying ranks the trench assail,
And make the foremost Moslem quail;
Or where the battery, guarded well, 60
Remains as yet impregnable,
Alighting cheerly to inspire
The soldier slackening in his fire;

The first and freshest of the host
Which Stamboul's sultan there can boast, 65
To guide the follower o'er the field,
To point the tube, the lance to wield,
Or whirl around the bickering blade; —
Was Alp, the Adrian renegade!

IV.

From Venice — once a race of worth 70
His gentle sires — he drew his birth;
But late an exile from her shore,
Against his countrymen he bore
The arms they taught to bear; and now
The turban girt his shaven brow. 75
Through many a change had Corinth passed
With Greece to Venice' rule a last;
And here, before her walls, with those
To Greece and Venice equal foes,
He stood a foe, with all the zeal 80
Which young and fiery converts feel,
Within whose heated bosom throngs
The memory of a thousand wrongs.
To him had Venice ceased to be
Her ancient civic boast — "the Free;" 85
And in the palace of St. Mark
Unnamed accusers in the dark

Within the "Lion's mouth" had placed
A charge against him uneffaced:
He fled in time, and saved his life, 90
To waste his future years in strife,
That taught his land how great her loss
In him who triumphed o'er the Cross,
'Gainst which he reared the Crescent high,
And battled to avenge or die. 95

V.

Coumourgi² — he whose closing scene
Adorned the triumph of Eugene,
When on Carlowitz' bloody plain,
The last and mightiest of the slain,
He sank, regretting not to die, 100
But curst the Christian's victory —
Coumourgi — can his glory cease,
That latest conqueror of Greece,
Till Christian hands to Greece restore
The freedom Venice gave of yore? 105
A hundred years have rolled away
Since he refixed the Moslem's sway;
And now he led the Mussulman,
And gave the guidance of the van
To Alp, who well repaid the trust 110
By cities levelled with the dust;

And proved, by many a deed of death,
How firm his heart in novel faith.

VI.

The walls grew weak; and fast and hot
Against them poured the ceaseless shot, 115
With unabating fury sent
From battery to battlement:
And thunder-like the pealing din
Rose from each heated culverin;
And here and there some crackling dome 120
Was fired before the exploding bomb:
And as the fabric sank beneath
The shattering shell's volcanic breath,
In red and wreathing columns flashed
The flame, as loud the ruin crashed, 125
Or into countless meteors driven,
Its earth-stars melted into heaven;
Whose clouds that day grew doubly dun,
Impervious to the hidden sun,
With volumed smoke that slowly grew 130
To one wide sky of sulphurous hue.

VII.

But not for vengeance, long delayed,
Alone, did Alp, the renegade,

The Moslem warriors sternly teach
His skill to pierce the promised breach: 135
Within these walls a maid was pent
His hope would win, without consent
Of that inexorable sire,
Whose heart refused him in its ire,
When Alp, beneath his Christian name, 140
Her virgin hand aspired to claim.
In happier mood, and earlier time,
While unimpeached for traitorous crime,
Gayest in gondola or hall,
He glittered through the Carnival; 145
And tuned the softest serenade
That e'er on Adria's waters played
At midnight to Italian maid.

VIII.

And many deemed her heart was won;
For sought by numbers, given to none, 150
Had young Francesca's hand remained
Still by the church's bonds unchained:
And when the Adriatic bore
Lanciotto to the Paynim shore,
Her wonted smiles were seen to fail, 155
And pensive waxed the maid and pale;
More constant at confessional,

More rare at masque and festival;
Or seen at such, with downcast eyes,
Which conquered heart they ceased to prize: 160
With listless look she seems to gaze;
With humbler care her form arrays;
Her voice less lively in the song;
Her step, though light, less fleet among
The pairs, on whom the Morning's glance 165
Breaks, yet unsated with the dance.

IX.

Sent by the state to guard the land,
(Which, wrested from the Moslem's hand,
While Sobieski tamed his pride
By Buda's wall and Danube's side, 170
The chiefs of Venice wrung away
From Patra to Euboea's bay,)
Minotti held in Corinth's towers
The Doge's delegated powers,
While yet the pitying eye of Peace 175
Smiled o'er her long forgotten Greece:
And ere that faithless truce was broke
Which freed her from the unchristian yoke,
With him his gentle daughter came;
Nor there, since Menelaus' dame 180
Forsook her lord and land, to prove

What woes await on lawless love,
Had fairer form adorned the shore
Than she, the matchless stranger, bore.

X.

The wall is rent, the ruins yawn; 185
And, with to-morrow's earliest dawn,
O'er the disjointed mass shall vault
The foremost of the fierce assault.
The bands are ranked; the chosen van
Of Tartar and of Mussulman, 190
The full of hope, misnamed "forlorn,"
Who hold the thought of death in scorn,
And win their way with falchions' force,
Or pave the path with many a corse,
O'er which the following brave may rise, 195
Their stepping-stone — the last who dies!

XI.

'Tis midnight: on the mountain's brown
The cold, round moon shines deeply down;
Blue roll the waters, blue the sky
Spreads like an ocean hung on high, 200
Bespangled with those isles of light,
So wildly, spiritually bright;
Who ever gazed upon them shining,

And turned to earth without repining,
Nor wished for wings to flee away, 205
And mix with their eternal ray?
The waves on either shore lay there
Calm, clear, and azure as the air;
And scarce their from the pebbles shook,
But murmured meekly as the brook. 210
The winds were pillowed on the waves;
The banners drooped along their staves,
And, as they fell around them furling,
Above them shone the crescent curling;
And that deep silence was unbroke, 215
Save where the watch his signal spoke,
Save where the steed neighed oft and shrill,
And echo answered from the hill,
And the wide hum of that wild host
Rustled like leaves from coast to coast, 220
As rose the Muezzin's voice in air
In midnight call to wonted prayer;
It rose, that chanted mournful strain,
Like some lone spirit's o'er the plain:
'Twas musical, but sadly sweet; 225
Such as when winds and harp-strings meet,
And take a long unmeasured tone,
To mortal minstrelsy unknown.
It seemed to those within the wall

A cry prophetic of their fall: 230
It struck even the besieger's ear
With something ominous and drear;
And undefined and sudden thrill,
Which makes the heart a moment still,
Then beat with quicker pulse, ashamed 235
Of that strange sense its silence framed;
Such as a sudden passing-bell
Wakes, though but for a stranger's knell.

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The tent of Alp was on the shore;
The sound was hushed, the prayer was o'er; 240
The watch was set, the night-round made,
All mandates issued and obeyed:
'Tis but another anxious night,
His pains the morrow may requite
With all revenge and love can pay, 245
In guerdon for their long delay.
Few hours remain, and he hath need
Of rest, to nerve for many a deed
Of slaughter; but within his soul
The thoughts like troubled waters roll. 250
He stood alone among the host;
Not his the loud fanatic boast
To plant the crescent o'er the cross,

Or risk a life with little loss,
Secure in paradise to be 255
By Houris loved immortally:
Nor his, what burning patriots feel,
The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
When battling on the parent soil. 260
He stood alone — a renegade
Against the country he betrayed,
He stood alone amidst his band,
Without a trusted heart or hand:
They followed him, for he was brave, 265
And great the spoil he got and gave;
They crouched to him, for he had skill
To warp and wield the vulgar will:
But still his Christian origin
With them was little less than sin. 270
They envied even the faithless fame
He earned beneath a Moslem name;
Since he, their mightiest chief, had been
In youth a bitter Nazarene.
They did not know how pride can stoop, 275
When baffled feelings withering droop;
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The quick successive throbs convulse;
In vain from side to side he throws
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Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow pressed,
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight 295
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread, 300
He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walked him forth along the sand,

Arise from out the earth which drank
The stream of slaughter as it sank,
That sanguine ocean would o'erflow
Her isthmus idly spread below:
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To plant the crescent o'er the cross,

Or risk a life with little loss,
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The stern exaltedness of zeal,
Profuse of blood, untired in toil,
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In vain from side to side he throws
His form, in courtship of repose; 290
Or if he dozed, a sound, a start
Awoke him with a sunken heart.
The turban on his hot brow pressed,
The mail weighed lead-like on his breast,
Though oft and long beneath its weight 295
Upon his eyes had slumber sate,
Without or couch or canopy,
Except a rougher field and sky
Than now might yield a warrior's bed,
Than now along the heaven was spread, 300
He could not rest, he could not stay
Within his tent to wait for day,
But walked him forth along the sand,

Where thousand sleepers strewed the strand.
What pillowed them? and why should he 305
More wakeful than the humblest be?
Since more their peril, worse their toil,
And yet they fearless dream of spoil;
While he alone, where thousands passed
A night of sleep, perchance their last, 310
In sickly vigil wandered on,
And envied all he gazed upon.

XVII.

He felt his soul become more light
Beneath the freshness of the night.
Cool was the silent sky, though calm, 315
And bathed his brow with airy balm:
Behind, the camp — before him lay,
In many a winding creek and bay,
Lepanto's gulf; and, on the brow
Of Delphi's hill, unshaken snow, 320
High and eternal, such as shone
Through thousand summers brightly gone,
Along the gulf, the mount, the clime;
It will not melt, like man, to time:
Tyrant and slave are swept away, 325
Less formed to wear before the ray;
But that white veil, the lightest, frailest,

Which on the mighty mount thou hailest,
While tower and tree are torn and rent,
Shines o'er its craggy battlement; 330
In form a peak, in height a cloud,
In texture like a hovering shroud,
Thus high by parting Freedom spread,
As from her fond abode she fled,
And lingered on the spot, where long 335
Her prophet spirit spake in song.
Oh, still her step at moments falters
O'er withered fields, and ruined altars,
And fain would wake, in souls too broken,
By pointing to each glorious token. 340
But vain her voice, till better days
Dawn in those yet remembered rays
Which shone upon the Persian flying,
And saw the Spartan smile in dying.

XV.

Not mindless of these mighty times 345
Was Alp, despite his flight and crimes;
And through this night, as on he wandered,
And o'er the past and present pondered,
And thought upon the glorious dead
Who there in better cause had bled, 350
He felt how faint and feebly dim

The fame that could accrue to him,
Who cheered the band, and waved the sword,
A traitor in a turbaned horde;
And led them to the lawless siege, 355
Whose best success were sacrilege.
Not so had those his fancy numbered,
The chiefs whose dust around him slumbered;
Their phalanx marshalled on the plain,
Whose bulwarks were not then in vain. 360
They fell devoted, but undying;
The very gale their names seemed sighing:
The waters murmured of their name;
The woods were peopled with their fame;
The silent pillar, lone and gray, 365
Claimed kindred with their sacred clay;
Their spirits wrapt the dusky mountain,
Their memory sparkled o'er the fountain;
The meanest rill, the mightiest river
Rolled mingling with their fame for ever. 370
Despite of every yoke she bears,
That land is glory's still and theirs!
'Tis still a watch-word to the earth:
When man would do a deed of worth
He points to Greece, and turns to tread, 375
So sanctioned, on the tyrant's head:

He looks to her, and rushes on
Where life is lost, or freedom won.

XVI.

Still by the shore Alp mutely mused,
And wooed the freshness Night diffused. 380
There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea,³
Which changeless rolls eternally;
So that wildest of waves, in their angriest mood,
Scarce break on the bounds of the land for a rood;
And the powerless moon beholds them flow, 385
Heedless if she come or go:
Calm or high, in main or bay,
On their course she hath no sway.
The rock unworn its base doth bare,
And looks o'er the surf, but it comes not there; 390
And the fringe of the foam may be seen below,
On the line that it left long ages ago:
A smooth short space of yellow sand
Between it and the greener land.
He wandered on, along the beach, 395
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguered wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?

Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts
waxed cold? 400

I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flashed no fire, and there hissed no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flanked the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost
tell 405

'The sullen words of the sentinel,
As his measured step on the stone below
Clanked, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival, 410
Gorging and growling o'er carcase and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripped the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter
skull, 415
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge
grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where
they fed,
So well had they broken a lingering fast

With those who had fallen for that night's
repast. 420

And Alp knew, by the turbans that rolled on the
sand,

The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair, ⁵
All the rest was shaven and bare. 425

The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.

But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,

Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away, 430
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;

But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Picked by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

XVII.

Alp turned him from the sickening sight:
Never had shaken his nerves in fight; 435

But he better could brook to behold the dying,
Deep in the tide of their warm blood lying,

Scorched with the death-thirst, and writhing in
vain,

Than the perishing dead who are past all pain.

'There is something of pride in the perilous hour,

Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honour's eye on daring deeds!
But when all is past, it is humbling to tread
O'er the weltering field of the tombless dead, 445
And see worms of the earth, and fowls of the air,
Beasts of the forest, all gathering there;
All regarding man as their prey,
All rejoicing in his decay.

XVIII.

There is a temple in ruin stands, 450
Fashioned by long forgotten hands;
Two or three columns, and many a stone,
Marble and granite, with grass o'ergrown!
Out upon Time! it will leave no more
Of the things to come than the things before! 455
Out upon Time! who for ever will leave
But enough of the past for the future to grieve
O'er that which hath been, and o'er that which
must be;
What we have seen, our sons shall see;
Remnants of things that have passed away, 460
Fragments of stone, reared by creatures of clay!

XIX.

He sate him down at a pillar's base,
And passed his hand athwart his face;
Like one in dreary musing mood,
Declining was his attitude; 465
His head was drooping on his breast,
Fevered, throbbing, and opprest;
And o'er his brow, so downward bent,
Oft his beating fingers went,
Hurriedly, as you may see 470
Your own run over the ivory key,
Ere the measured tone is taken
By the chords you would awaken.
There he sate all heavily,
As he heard the night-wind sigh. 475
Was it the wind, through some hollow stone,⁶
Sent that soft and tender moan?
He lifted his head, and he looked on the sea,
But it was unrippled as glass may be;
He looked on the long grass — it waved not
a blade; 480
How was that gentle sound conveyed?
He looked to the banners — each flag lay still,
So did the leaves on Cithaeron's hill,
And he felt not a breath come over his cheek;
What did that sudden sound bespeak? 485

He turned to the left — is he sure of sight?
There sate a lady, youthful and bright!

XX.

He started up with more of fear
Than if an armed foe were near.
“God of my fathers! what is here? 490

“Who art thou, and wherefore sent
“So near a hostile armament?”

His trembling hands refused to sign
The cross he deemed no more divine:
He had resumed it in that hour, 495

But conscience wrung away the power.
He gazed, he saw: he knew the face
Of beauty, and the form of grace;
It was Francesca by his side,
The maid who might have been his bride! 500

The rose was yet upon her cheek,
But mellowed with a tenderer streak:
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.
The ocean's calm within their view, 505
Beside her eye had less of blue;
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance, though clear, was chill.

Around her form a thin robe twining,
Nought concealed her bosom shining; 510
Through the parting of her hair,
Floating darkly downward there,
Her rounded arm showed white and bare:
And ere yet she made reply,
Once she raised her hand on high: 515
It was so wan, and transparent of hue,
You might have seen the moon shine through.

XXI.

"I come from my rest to him I love best,
"That I may be happy, and he may be blest.
"I have passed the guards, the gate, the wall; 520
"Sought thee in safety through foes and all.
"'Tis said the lion will turn and flee
"From a maid in the pride of her purity;
"And the Power on high, that can shield the good
"Thus from the tyrant of the wood, 525
"Hath extended its mercy to guard me as well
"From the hands of the leaguering infidel.
"I come — and if I come in vain,
"Never, oh never, we meet again!
"Thou hast done a fearful deed 530
"In falling away from thy father's creed:
"But dash that turban to earth, and sign

“The sign of the cross, and for ever be mine:
“Wring the black drop from thy heart,
“And to-morrow unites us no more to part.” 535

“And where should our bridal couch be spread?

“In the midst of the dying and the dead?

“For to-morrow we give to the slaughter and flame

“The sons and the shrines of the Christian name.

“None, save thou and thine, I’ve sworn, 540

“Shall be left upon the morn:

“But thee will I bear to a lovely spot,

“Where our hands shall be joined, and our sorrow
forgot.

“There thou yet shalt be my bride,

“When once again I’ve quelled the pride 545

“Of Venice; and her hated race

“Have felt the arm they would debase

“Scourge, with a whip of scorpions, those

“Whom vice and envy made my foes.”

Upon his hand she laid her own — 550

Light was the touch, but it thrilled to the bone,

And shot a chillness to his heart,

Which fixed him beyond the power to start.

Though slight was that grasp so mortal cold,

He could not loose him from its hold; 555

But never did clasp of one so dear

Strike on the pulse with such feeling of fear,
As those thin fingers, long and white,
Froze through his blood by their touch that night.
The feverish glow of his brow was gone, 560
And his heart sank so still that it felt like stone,
As he looked on the face, and beheld its hue
So deeply changed from what he knew:
Fair but faint — without the ray
Of mind, that made each feature play 565
Like sparkling waves on a sunny day;
And her motionless lips lay still as death,
And her words came forth without her breath,
And there rose not a heave o'er her bosom's swell,
And there seemed not a pulse in her veins to dwell.
Though her eye shone out, yet the lids were fixed,
And the glance that it gave was wild and unmixed
With aught of change, as the eyes may seem
Of the restless who walk in a troubled dream;
Like the figures on arras, that gloomily glare, 575
Stirred by the breath of the wintry air,
So seen by the dying lamp's fitful light,
Lifeless, but life-like, and awful to sight;
As they seem, through the dimness, about to come
down
From the shadowy wall where their images
frown; 580

Fearfully flitting to and fro,
As the gusts on the tapestry come and go.

"If not for love of me be given

"Thus much, then, for the love of heaven, —

"Again I say — that turban tear 585

"From off thy faithless brow, and swear

"Thine injured country's sons to spare,

"Or thou art lost; and never shalt see

"Not earth — that's past — but heaven or me.

"If this thou dost accord, albeit 590

"A heavy doom 'tis thine to meet,

"That doom shall half absolve thy sin,

"And mercy's gate may receive thee within:

"But pause one moment more, and take

"The curse of him thou didst forsake; 595

"And look once more to heaven, and see

"Its love for ever shut from thee.

"There is a light cloud by the moon? —

"'Tis passing, and will pass full soon —

"If, by the time its vapoury sail 600

"Hath ceased her shaded orb to veil,

"Thy heart within thee is not changed,

"Then God and man are both avenged;

"Dark will thy doom be, darker still

"Thine immortality of ill." 605

Alp looked to heaven, and saw on high
The sign she spake of in the sky;
But his heart was swollen, and turned aside,
By deep interminable pride.

This first false passion of his breast 610
Rolled like a torrent o'er the rest.

He sue for mercy! *He* dismayed
By wild words of a timid maid!

He, wronged by Venice, vow to save
Her sons, devoted to the grave! 615

No — though that cloud were thunder's worst,
And charged to crush him — let it burst!

He looked upon it earnestly,
Without an accent of reply;
He watched it passing; it is flown: 620

Full on his eye the clear moon shone,
And thus he spake — "Whate'er my fate,

"I am no changeling — 'tis too late:

"The reed in storms may bow and quiver,

"Then rise again; the tree must shiver. 625

"What Venice made me, I must be,

"Her foe in all, save love to thee:

"But thou art safe: oh, fly with me!"

He turned, but she is gone!

Nothing is there but the column stone. 630

Hath she sunk in the earth, or melted in air?
He saw not, he knew not; but nothing is there.

XXII.

The night is past, and shines the sun
As if that morn were a jocund one.

Lightly and brightly breaks away 635

The morning from her mantle grey,

And the Noon will look on a sultry day.

Hark to the trump, and the drum,

And the mournful sound of the barbarous horn,

And the flap of the banners, that flit as they're borne,

And the neigh of the steed, and the multitude's hum,

And the clash, and the shout, 'they come, they come!'

The horsetails⁸ are plucked from the ground, and

the sword

From its sheath, and they form, and but wait for

the word.

Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman, 645

Strike your tents, and throng to the van;

Mount ye, spur ye, skirr the plain,

That the fugitive may flee in vain,

When he breaks from the town; and none escape,

Aged or young, in the Christian shape; 650

While your fellows on foot, in a fiery mass,

Bloodstain the breach through which they pass.

The steeds are all bridled, and snort to the rein;
Curved is each neck, and flowing each mane;
White is the foam of their champ on the bit: 655
The spears are uplifted; the matches are lit;
The cannon are pointed, and ready to roar,
And crush the wall they have crumbled before:
Forms in his phalanx each Janizar;
Alp at their head; his right arm is bare, 660
So is the blade of his scimitar;
The khan and the pachas are all at their post:
The vizier himself at the head of the host.
When the culverin's signal is fired, then on;
Leave not in Corinth a living one — 665
A priest at her altars, a chief in her halls,
A hearth in her mansions, a stone on her walls.
God and the prophet — Alla Hu!
Up to the skies with that wild halloo!
“There the breach lies for passage, the ladder to
scale; 670
“And your hands on your sabres, and how should
ye fail?
“He who first downs with the red cross may crave
“His heart's dearest wish; let him ask it, and have!”
Thus uttered Coumourgî, the dauntless vizier;
The reply was the brandish of sabre and spear, 675

And the shout of fierce thousands in joyous ire: —
Silence — hark to the signal — fire!

XXIII.

As the wolves, that headlong go
On the stately buffalo,
Though with fiery eyes, and angry roar, 680
And hoofs that stamp, and horns that gore,
He tramples on earth, or tosses on high
The foremost, who rush on his strength but to die:
Thus against the wall they went,
Thus the first were backward bent; 685
Many a bosom, sheathed in brass,
Strewed the earth like broken glass,
Shivered by the shot, that tore
The ground whereon they moved no more:
Even as they fell, in files they lay, 690
Like the mower's grass at the close of day,
When his work is done on the levelled plain;
Such was the fall of the foremost slain.

XXIV.

As the spring-tides, with heavy plash,
From the cliff's invading dash 695
Huge fragments, sapped by the ceaseless flow,
Till white and thundering down they go,

Like the avalanche's snow
On the Alpine vales below;
Thus at length, outbreathed and worn, 700
Corinth's sons were downward borne
By the long and oft renewed
Charge of the Moslem multitude.
In firmness they stood, and in masses they fell,
Heaped, by the host of the infidel; 705
Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute;
Stroke and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter, or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder, 710
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them, or for their foes;
If they must mourn, or may rejoice
In that annihilating voice, 715
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new:
You might have heard it, on that day,
O'er Salamis and Megara;
(We have heard the hearers say,) 720
Even unto Piraeus bay.

XXV.

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt.
But the rampart is won, and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done. 725
Shriller shrieks now mingling come
From within the plundered dome:
Hark to the haste of flying feet,
That splash in the blood of the slippery street;
But here and there, where 'vantage ground 730
Against the foe may still be found,
Desperate groups, of twelve or ten,
Make a pause, and turn again —
With banded backs against the wall,
Fiercely stand, or fighting fall. 735
There stood an old man — his hairs were white,
But his veteran arm was full of might:
So gallantly bore he the brunt of the fray,
The dead before him, on that day,
In a semicircle lay; 740
Still he combated unwounded,
Though retreating, unsurrounded.
Many a scar of former fight
Lurked beneath his corslet bright;
But of every wound his body bore, 745
Each and all had been ta'en before:

Though aged he was, so iron of limb,
Few of our youth could cope with him;
And the foes, whom he singly kept at bay,
Outnumbered his thin hairs of silver gray. 750
From right to left his sabre swept:
Many an Othman mother wept
Sons that were unborn, when dipped
His weapon first in Moslem gore,
Ere his years could count a score. 755
Of all he might have been the sire
Who fell that day beneath his ire:
For, sonless left long years ago,
His wrath made many a childless foe;
And since the day, when in the strait⁹ 760
His only boy had met his fate,
His parent's iron hand did doom
More than a human hecatomb.
If shades by carnage be appeased,
Patroclus' spirit less was pleased 765
Than his, Minotti's son, who died
Where Asia's bounds and ours divide.
Buried he lay, where thousands before
For thousands of years were inhumed on the
shore:
What of them is left, to tell 770
Where they lie, and how they fell?

Not a stone on their turf, nor a bone in their graves;
But they live in the verse that immortally saves.

XXVI.

Hark to the Allah shout! a band
Of the Mussulman bravest and best is at hand: 775
Their leader's nervous arm is bare,
Swifter to smite, and never to spare —
Unclothed to the shoulder it waves them on;
Thus in the fight is he ever known:
Others a gaudier garb may show, 780
To tempt the spoil of the greedy foe;
Many a hand's on a richer hilt,
But none on a steel more ruddily gilt;
Many a loftier turban may wear, —
Alp is but known by the white arm bare; 785
Look through the thick of the fight, 'tis there!
There is not a standard on that shore
So well advanced the ranks before;
There is not a banner in Moslem war
Will lure the Delhis half so far; 790
It glances like a falling star!
Where'er that mighty arm is seen,
The bravest be, or late have been;
There the craven cries for quarter
Vainly to the vengeful Tartar; 795

Or the hero, silent lying,
 Scorns to yield a groan in dying;
 Mustering his last feeble blow
 'Gainst the nearest levelled foe,
 'Though faint beneath the mutual wound 800
 Grappling on the gory ground.

XXVII.

Still the old man stood erect,
 And Alp's career a moment checked.
 "Yield thee, Minotti; quarter take,
 "For thine own, thy daughter's sake." 805

"Never, renegado, never!
 'Though the life of thy gift would last for ever."
 'Francesca! — Oh my promised bride!
 "Must she too perish by thy pride?"
 "She is safe." — "Where? where?" — "In
 heaven;" 810

"From whence thy traitor soul is driven —
 "Far from thee, and undefiled."
 Grimly then Minotti smiled,
 As he saw Alp staggering bow
 Before his words, as with a blow. 815
 "Oh God! when died she?" — "Yesternight —
 "Nor weep I for her spirit's flight:

“None of my pure race shall be
“Slaves to Mahomet and thee —
“Come on!” — That challenge is in vain — 820
Alp’s already with the slain!
While Minotti’s words were wreaking
More revenge in bitter speaking
Than his falchion’s point had found,
Had the time allowed to wound, 825
From within the neighbouring porch
Of a long defended church,
Where the last and desperate few
Would the failing fight renew,
The sharp shot dashed Alp to the ground; 830
Ere an eye could view the wound
That crashed through the brain of the infidel,
Round he spun, and down he fell;
A flash like fire within his eyes
Blazed, as he bent no more to rise, 835
And then eternal darkness sunk
Through all the palpitating trunk;
Nought of life left, save a quivering
Where his limbs were slightly shivering:
They turned him on his back; his breast 840
And brow were stained with gore and dust,
And through his lips the life-blood oozed,
From its deep veins lately loosed;

But in his pulse there was no throb,
Nor on his lips one dying sob; 845
Sigh, nor word, nor struggling breath
Heralded his way to death:
Ere his very thought could pray,
Unanealed he passed away,
Without a hope from mercy's aid, — 850
To the last a renegade.

XXVIII.

Fearfully the yell arose
Of his followers, and his foes;
These in joy, in fury those:
Then again in conflict mixing, 855
Clashing swords, and spears transfixing,
Interchanged the blow and thrust,
Hurling warriors in the dust.
Street by street, and foot by foot,
Still Minotti dares dispute 860
The latest portion of the land
Left beneath his high command;
With him, aiding heart and hand,
The remnant of his gallant band.
Still the church is tenable, 865
Whence issued late the fated ball
That half avenged the city's fall,

When Alp, her fierce assailant, fell:
Thither bending sternly back,
They leave before a bloody track; 870
And, with their faces to the foe,
Dealing wounds with every blow,
The chief, and his retreating train,
Join to those within the fane:
There they yet may breathe awhile, 875
Sheltered by the massy pile.

XXIX.

Brief breathing-time! the turbaned host,
With added ranks and raging boast,
Press onwards with such strength and heat,
Their numbers balk their own retreat; 880
For narrow the way that led to the spot
Where still the Christians yielded not;
And the foremost, if fearful, may vainly try
Through the massy column to turn and fly;
They perforce must do or die. 885
They die; but ere their eyes could close
Avengers o'er their bodies rose;
Fresh and furious, fast they fill
The ranks unthinned, though slaughtered still;
And faint the weary Christians wax 890
Before the still renewed attacks:

And now the Othmans gain the gate;
 Still resists its iron weight,
 And still, all deadly aimed and hot,
 From every crevice comes the shot; 895
 From every shattered window pour
 The volleys of the sulphurous shower:
 But the portal wavering grows and weak —
 The iron yields, the hinges creak —
 It bends — it falls — and all is o'er; 900
 Lost Corinth may resist no more!

XXX.

Darkly, sternly, and all alone,
 Minotti stood o'er the altar stone:
 Madonna's face upon him shone,
 Painted in heavenly hues above, 905
 With eyes of light and looks of love;
 And placed upon that holy shrine
 To fix our thoughts on things divine,
 When pictured there, we kneeling see
 Her, and the boy - God on her knee, 910
 Smiling sweetly on each prayer
 To heaven, as if to waft it there.
 Still she smiled; even now she smiles,
 Though slaughter streams along her aisles;
 Minotti lifted his aged eye, 915

And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
And still he stood, while, with steel and flame,
Inward and onward the Mussulman came.

XXXI.

The vaults beneath the mosaic stone 920
Contained the dead of ages gone;
Their names were on the graven floor,
But now illegible with gore;
The carved crests, and curious hues
The varied marble's veins diffuse, 925
Were smeared, and slippery — stained, and strown
With broken swords, and helms o'erthrown:
There were dead above, and the dead below
Lay cold in many a confined row;
You might see them piled in sable state, 930
By a pale light through a gloomy grate;
But War had entered their dark caves,
And stored along the vaulted graves
Her sulphurous treasures, thickly spread
In masses by the fleshless dead: 935
Here, throughout the siege, had been
The Christians' chiefest magazine;
To these a late formed train now led,

Minotti's last and stern resource
Against the foe's o'erwhelming force. 940

XXXII.

The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain:
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead, 945
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had blessed. 950
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 955
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day;
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray.
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow

Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row;
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil — the richest, and the last. 965

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretched
To grasp the spoil he almost reached,
When old Minotti's hand
Touched with the torch the train —
'Tis fired! 970
Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turbaned victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,
In one wild roar expired! 975
The shattered town — the walls thrown down —
The waves a moment backward bent —
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake passed —
The thousand shapeless things all driven 980
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,
By that tremendous blast —
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore:
Up to the sky like rockets go 985
All that mingled there below:

Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strewed the plain: 990
Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scattered o'er the isthmus lay; 995
Christian or Moslem, which be they?
Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child, 1000
Little deemed she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;
That one moment left no trace 1005
More of human form or face
Save a scattered scalp or bone:
And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dented in the clay, 1010
All blackened there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard

And made the sign of a cross with a sigh,
Then seized a torch which blazed thereby;
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The foe came on, and few remain
To strive, and those must strive in vain:
For lack of further lives, to slake
The thirst of vengeance now awake,
With barbarous blows they gash the dead, 945
And lop the already lifeless head,
And fell the statues from their niche,
And spoil the shrines of offerings rich,
And from each other's rude hands wrest
The silver vessels saints had blessed. 950
To the high altar on they go;
Oh, but it made a glorious show!
On its table still behold
The cup of consecrated gold;
Massy and deep, a glittering prize, 955
Brightly it sparkles to plunderers' eyes:
That morn it held the holy wine,
Converted by Christ to his blood so divine,
Which his worshippers drank at the break of day;
To shrive their souls ere they joined in the fray.
Still a few drops within it lay;
And round the sacred table glow

Twelve lofty lamps, in splendid row;
From the purest metal cast;
A spoil — the richest, and the last. 965

XXXIII.

So near they came, the nearest stretched
To grasp the spoil he almost reached,
When old Minotti's hand
Touched with the torch the train —

'Tis fired! 970
Spire, vaults, the shrine, the spoil, the slain,
The turbaned victors, the Christian band,
All that of living or dead remain,
Hurled on high with the shivered fane,

In one wild roar expired! 975
The shattered town — the walls thrown down —
The waves a moment backward bent —
The hills that shake, although unrent,
As if an earthquake passed —

The thousand shapeless things all driven 980
In cloud and flame athwart the heaven,

By that tremendous blast —
Proclaimed the desperate conflict o'er
On that too long afflicted shore:
Up to the sky like rockets go 985
All that mingled there below:

Many a tall and goodly man,
Scorched and shrivelled to a span,
When he fell to earth again
Like a cinder strewed the plain: 990
Down the ashes shower like rain;
Some fell in the gulf, which received the sprinkles
With a thousand circling wrinkles;
Some fell on the shore, but, far away,
Scattered o'er the isthmus lay; 995
Christian or Moslem, which be they?
Let their mothers see and say!
When in cradled rest they lay,
And each nursing mother smiled
On the sweet sleep of her child, 1000
Little deemed she such a day
Would rend those tender limbs away.
Not the matrons that them bore
Could discern their offspring more;
That one moment left no trace 1005
More of human form or face
Save a scattered scalp or bone:
And down came blazing rafters, strown
Around, and many a falling stone,
Deeply dented in the clay, 1010
All blackened there and reeking lay.
All the living things that heard

That deadly earth shock disappeared:
The wild birds flew; the wild dogs fled,
And howling left the unburied dead; 1015
The camels from their keepers broke;
The distant steer forsook the yoke —
The nearer steed plunged o'er the plain,
And burst his girth, and tore his rein;
The bull-frogs note, from out the marsh, 1020
Deep-mouthed arose, and doubly harsh:
The wolves yelled on the caverned hill,
Where echo rolled in thunder still;
The jackal's troop, in gathered cry, 10
Bayed from afar complainingly, 1025
With a mixed and mournful sound,
Like crying babe, and beaten hound:
With sudden wing, and ruffled breast,
The eagle left his rocky nest,
And mounted nearer to the sun, 1030
The clouds beneath him seemed so dun;
'Their smoke assailed his startled beak,
And made him higher soar and shriek —

Thus was Corinth lost and won!

NOTES.

23701

N O T E S.

Note 1, page 12, line 23.

The Turcoman hath left his herd.

The life of the Turcomans is wandering and patriarchal: they dwell in tents.

Note 2, page 15, line 9.

Coumourgi — he whose closing scene.

Ali Coumourgi, the favourite of three sultans, and Grand Vizier to Achmet III. after recovering Peloponnesus from the Venetians in one campaign, was mortally wounded in the next, against the Germans, at the battle of Peterwaradin, (in the plain of Carlowitz) in Hungary, endeavouring to rally his guards. He died of his wounds next day. His last order was the decapitation of General Breuner, and some other German prisoners; and his last words,

"Oh that I could thus serve all the Christian dogs!" a speech and act not unlike one of Caligula! He was a young man of great ambition and unbounded presumption: on being told that Prince Eugene, then opposed to him, "was a great general," he said, "I shall become a greater, and at his expense."

Note 3, page 27, line 5.

There shrinks no ebb in that tideless sea.

The reader need hardly be reminded that there are no perceptible tides in the Mediteranean.

Note 4, page 28, line 16.

And their white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull.

This spectacle I have seen, such as described, beneath the wall of the Seraglio at Constantinople, in the little cavities worn by the Bosphorus in the rock, a narrow terrace of which projects between the wall and the water. I think the fact is also mentioned in Hobhouse's Travels. The bodies were probably those of some refractory Janizaries.

Note 5, page 29, line 5.

And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair.

This tuft, or long lock, is left from a supersition that Mahomet will draw them into Paradise by it.

Note 6, page 31, line 15.

I must here acknowledge a close, though unintentional, resemblance in these twelve lines to a passage in an unpublished poem of Mr. Coleridge, called "Christabel." It was not till after these lines were written that I heard that

wild and singularly original and beautiful poem recited: and the MS. of that production I never saw till very recently, by the kindness of Mr. Coleridge himself, who, I hope, is convinced that I have not been a wilful plagiarist. The original idea undoubtedly pertains to Mr. Coleridge, whose poem has been composed above fourteen years. Let me conclude by a hope that he will not longer delay the publication of a production, of which I can only add my mite of approbation to the applause of far more competent judges.

Note 7, page 36, line 18.

There is a light cloud by the moon —

I have been told that the idea expressed from lines 597 to 603 has been admired by those whose approbation is valuable. I am glad of it; but it is not original — at least not mine; it may be found much better expressed in pages 132 — 3 — 4 of the English version of "Vathek" (I forget the precise page of the french), a work to which I have before referred; and never recur to, or read, without a renewal of gratification.

Note 8, page 38, line 13.

*The horsetails are plucked from the ground, and
the sword.*

The horsetail, fixed upon a lance, a Pasha's standard.

Note 9, page 43, line 14.

And since the day, when in the strait.

In the naval battle at the mouth of the Dardanelles, between the Venetians and the Turks.

Note 10, page 54, line 12.

The jackal's troop, in gathered cry.

I believe I have taken a poetical license to transplant the jackal from Asia. In Greece I never saw nor heard these animals; but among the ruins of Ephesus I have heard them by hundreds. They haunt ruins, and follow armies.

PARISINA.

P A R I S I M A.

TO
SCROPE BERDMORE DAVIES, Esq.

THE FOLLOWING POEM

IS INSCRIBED

BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIRERD HIS TALENTS

AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP.

Jan. 22, 1816.

The following poem is grounded on a circumstance mentioned in Gibbon's "Antiquities of the House of Brunswick." — I am aware, that in modern times the delicacy or fastidiousness of the reader may deem such subjects unfit for the purposes of poetry. The Greek dramatists, and some of the best of our old English writers, were of a different opinion: as Alfieri and Schiller have also been, more recently, upon the continent. The following extract will explain the facts on which the story is founded. The name of *Azo* is substituted for Nicholas, as more metrical.

"Under the reign of Nicholas III. Ferrara was polluted with
„a domestic tragedy. By the testimony of an attendant,
„and his own observation, the Marquis of Este discovered the incestuous loves of his wife Parisina, and
„Hugo his bastard son, a beautiful and valiant youth.
„They were beheaded in the castle by the sentence of
„a father and husband, who published his shame, and
„survived their execution. He was unfortunate, if they
„were guilty; if they were innocent, he was still more
„unfortunate; nor is there any possible situation in
„which I can sincerely approve the last act of the
„justice of a parent." — *Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works*,
vol. 3d. p. 460, new edition.

PARISINA.

I.

It is the hour when from the boughs
The nightingale's high note is heard;
It is the hour when lovers' vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word;
And gentle winds, and waters near, 5
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews have lightly wet,
And in the sky the stars are met,
And on the wave is deeper blue,
And on the leaf a browner hue, 10
And in the heaven that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
Which follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away. 1

II.

But it is not to list to the waterfall 15
That Parisina leaves her hall,
And it is not to gaze on the heavenly light
That the lady walks in the shadow of night;
And if she sits in Este's bower,
'Tis not for the sake of its full-blown flower — 20
She listens — but not for the nightingale —
Though her ear expects as soft a tale.
There glides a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale — and her heart beats
quick.
There whispers a voice through the rustling
leaves, 25
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves:
A moment more — and they shall meet —
'Tis past — her lover's at her feet.

III.

And what unto them is the world beside
With all its change of time and tide? 30
Its living things — its earth and sky —
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had passed away, 35

They only for each other breathe;
Their very sighs are full of joy
So deep, that did it not decay,
That happy madness would destroy
The hearts which feel its fiery sway: 40
Of guilt, of peril, do they deem
In that tumultuous tender dream?
Who that have felt that passion's power,
Or paused, or feared in such an hour?
Or thought how brief such moments last: 45
But yet — they are already past!
Alas! we must awake before
We know such vision comes no more.

IV.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past; 50
And though they hope, and vow, they grieve,
As if that parting were the last.
The frequent sigh — the long embrace —
The lip that there would cling for ever,
While gleams on Parisina's face 55
The Heaven she fears will not forgive her,
As if each calmly conscious star
Beheld her frailty from afar —
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,

Yet binds them to their trysting-place. 60
But it must come, and they must part
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill
Which follows fast the deeds of ill.

V.

And Hugo is gone to his lonely bed, 65
'To covet there another's bride;
But she must lay her conscious head
A husband's trusting heart beside.
But fevered in her sleep she seems,
And red her cheek with troubled dreams, 70
And mutters she in her unrest
A name she dare not breathe by day,
And clasps her Lord unto the breast
Which pants for one away:
And he to that embrace awakes, 75
And, happy in the thought, mistakes
That dreaming sigh, and warm caress,
For such as he was wont to bless;
And could in very fondness weep
O'er her who loves him even in sleep. 80

VI.

He clasped her sleeping to his heart,
And listened to each broken word:

He hears — Why doth Prince Azo start,
As if the Archangel's voice he heard?

And well he may — a deeper doom 85

Could scarcely thunder o'er his tomb,

When he shall wake to sleep no more,

And stand the eternal throne before.

And well he may — his earthly peace

Upon that sound is doomed to cease. 90

That sleeping whisper of a name

Bespeaks her guilt and Azo's shame.

And whose that name? that o'er his pillow

Sounds fearful as the breaking billow,

Which rolls the plank upon the shore, 95

And dashes on the pointed rock

The wretch who sinks to rise no more, —

So came upon his soul the shock.

And whose that name? 'tis Hugo's, — his —

In sooth he had not deemed of this! — 100

'Tis Hugo's, — he, the child of one

He loved — his own all-evil son —

The offspring of his wayward youth,

When he betrayed Bianca's truth,

The guilt — the doom —

The maid whose folly could confide 105
In him who made her not his bride.

VII.

He plucked his poignard in its sheath,
But sheathed it ere the point was bare —
Howe'er unworthy now to breathe,
He could not slay a thing so fair — 110
At least, not smiling — sleeping — there —
Nay, more: — he did not wake her then,
But gazed upon her with a glance
Which, had she roused her from her trance,
Had frozen her sense to sleep again — 115
And o'er his brow the burning lamp
Gleamed on the dew-drops big and damp.
She spake no more — but still she slumbered —
While, in his thought, her days are numbered.

VIII.

And with the morn he sought, and found, 120
In many a tale from those around,
The proof of all he feared to know,
Their present guilt, his future woe;
The long - conniving damsels seek
To save themselves, and would transfer 125
The guilt — the shame — the doom — to her:

Concealment is no more — they speak
All circumstance which may compel
Full credence to the tale they tell:
And Azo's tortured heart and ear 130
Have nothing more to feel or hear.

IX.

He was not one who brooked delay:
Within the chamber of his state,
The chief of Este's ancient sway
Upon his throne of judgment sate; 135
His nobles and his guards are there, —
Before him is the sinful pair;
Both young, — and *one* how passing fair!
With swordless belt, and fettered hand,
Oh, Christ! that thus a son should stand 140
Before a father's face!
Yet thus must Hugo meet his sire,
And hear the sentence of his ire,
The tale of his disgrace!
And yet he seems not overcome, 145
Although, as yet, his voice be dumb.

X.

And still, and pale, and silently
Did Parisina wait her doom;

How changed since last her speaking eye
Glanced gladness round the glittering room, 150
Where high-born men were proud to wait —
Where Beauty watched to imitate
Her gentle voice — her lovely mien —
And gather from her air and gait
The graces of its queen: 155
Then, — had her eye in sorrow wept,
A thousand warriors forth had leapt,
A thousand swords had sheathless shone,
And made her quarrel all their own.
Now, — what is she? and what are they? 160
Can she command, or these obey?
All silent and unheeding now,
With downcast eyes and knitting brow,
And folded arms, and freezing air,
And lips that scarce their scorn forbear, 165
Her knights and dames, her court — is there:
And he, the chosen one, whose lance
Had yet been couched before her glance,
Who — were his arm a moment free —
Had died or gained her liberty; 170
The minion of his father's bride, —
He, too, is fettered by her side;
Nor sees her swoln and full eye swim
Less for her own despair than him:

Those lids o'er which the violet vein — 175
 Wandering, leaves a tender stain,
 Shining through the smoothest white
 That e'er did softest kiss invite —
 Now seemed with hot and livid glow
 To press, not shade, the orbs below; 180
 Which glance so heavily, and fill,
 As tear on tear grows gathering still.

XI.

And he for her had also wept,
 But for the eyes that on him gazed:
 His sorrow, if he felt it, slept; 185
 Stern and erect his brow was raised.
 Whate'er the grief his soul avowed,
 He would not shrink before the crowd;
 But yet he dared not look on her:
 Remembrance of the hours that were — 190
 His guilt — his love — his present state —
 His father's wrath — all good men's hate —
 His earthly, his eternal fate —
 And hers, — oh, hers! — he dared not throw
 One look upon that deathlike brow! 195
 Else had his rising heart betrayed
 Remorse for all the wreck it made.

XII.

And Azo spake: — “But yesterday

“I gloried in a wife and son;

“That dream this morning passed away; 200

“Ere day declines, I shall have none.

“My life must linger on alone;

“Well, — let that pass, — there breathes not one

“Who would not do as I have done;

“Those ties are broken — not by me; 205

“Let that too pass; — the doom’s prepared!

“Hugo, the priest awaits on thee,

“And then — thy crime’s reward!

“Away! address thy prayers to Heaven,

“Before its evening stars are met — 210

“Learn if thou there canst be forgiven;

“Its mercy may absolve thee yet.

“But here, upon the earth beneath,

“There is no spot where thou and I

“Together, for an hour, could breathe: 215

“Farewell! I will not see thee die —

“But thou, frail thing! shalt view his head —

“Away! I cannot speak the rest: —

“Go! woman of the wanton breast;

“Not I, but thou his blood dost shed: 220

“Go! if that sight thou canst outlive,

“And joy thee in the life I give,”

XIII.

And here stern Azo hid his face —

For on his brow the swelling vein

Throbb'd as if back upon his brain 225

The hot blood ebb'd and flow'd again;

And therefore bow'd he for a space,

And pass'd his shaking hand along

His eye, to veil it from the throng;

While Hugo rais'd his chained hands, 230

And for a brief delay demands

His father's ear: the silent sire

Forbids not what his words require.

“It is not that I dread the death —

“For thou hast seen me by thy side 235

“All redly through the battle ride,

“And that not once a useless brand

“Thy slaves have wrested from my hand,

“Hath shed more blood in cause of thine,

“Than e'er can stain the axe of mine: 240

“Thou gav'st, and may'st resume my breath,

“A gift for which I thank thee not;

“Nor are my mother's wrongs forgot,

“Her slighted love and ruined name,

“Her offspring's heritage of shame; 245

“But she is in the grave, where he,

"Her son, thy rival, soon shall be.

"Her broken heart — my severed head —

"Shall witness for thee from the dead

"How trusty and how tender were 250

"Thy youthful love — paternal care.

"'Tis true, that I have done thee wrong — 7

"But wrong for wrong — this deemed thy pride,

"The other victim of thy pride,

"Thou know'st for me was destined long. 255

"Thou saw'st, and coveted'st her charms —

"And with thy very crime — my birth,

"Thou taunted'st me — as little worth;

"A match ignoble for her arms,

"Because, forsooth, I could not claim 260

"The lawful heirship of thy name,

"Nor sit on Este's lineal throne:

"Yet, were a few short summers mine,

"My name should more than Este's shine

"With honours all my own. 265

"I had a sword — and have a breast

"That should have won as haught² a crest

"As ever waved along the line

"Of all these sovereign sires of thine.

"Not always knightly spurs are worn 270

"The brightest by the better born;

"And mine have lanced my courser's flank

"Before proud chiefs of princely rank,

"When charging to the cheering cry

"Of 'Este and of Victory!' 275

"I will not plead the cause of crime,

"Nor sue thee to redeem from time

"A few brief hours or days that must

"At length roll o'er my reckless dust; —

"Such maddening moments as my past, 280

"They could not, and they did not, last —

"Albeit my birth and name be base,

"And thy nobility of race

"Disdained to deck a thing like me —

"Yet in my lineaments they trace 285

"Some features of my father's face,

"And in my spirit — all of thee.

"From thee — this tamelessness of heart —

"From thee — nay, wherefore dost thou start? —

"From thee in all their vigour came 290

"My arm of strength, my soul of flame —

"Thou didst not give me life alone,

"But all that made me more thine own.

"See what thy guilty love hath done!

"Repaid thee with too like a son! 295

"I am no bastard in my soul,

"For that, like thine, abhorred controul:

"And for my breath, that hasty boon

“Thou gav’st and wilt resume so soon,
“I valued it no more than thou, 300
“When rose thy casque above thy brow,
“And we, all side by side, have striven,
“And o’er the dead our coursers driven:
“The past is nothing — and at last
“The future can but be the past: 305
“Yet would I that I then had died:
“For though thou work’dst my mother’s ill,
“And made thy own my destined bride,
“I feel thou art my father still;
“And, harsh as sounds thy hard decree, 310
“’Tis not unjust, although from thee.
“Begot in sin, to die in shame,
“My life begun and ends the same:
“As erred the sire, so erred the son,
“And thou must punish both in one. 315
“My crime seems worst to human view,
“But God must judge between us too!”

XIV.

He ceased — and stood with folded arms,
On which the circling fetters sounded;
And not an ear but felt as wounded, 320
Of all the chiefs that there were ranked,
When those dull chains in meeting clanked:

Till Parisina's fatal charms
Again attracted every eye —
Would she thus hear him doomed to die! 325.
She stood, I said, all pale and still,
The living cause of Hugo's ill:
Her eyes unmoved, but full and wide,
Not once had turned to either side —
Nor once did those sweet eyelids close, 330
Or shade the glance o'er which they rose,
But round their orbs of deepest blue
The circling white dilated grew —
And there with glassy gaze she stood
As ice were in her curdled blood; 335
But every now and then a tear
 So large and slowly gathered slid
 From the long dark fringe of that fair lid,
It was a thing to see, not hear!
And those who saw, it did surprise, 340
Such drops could fall from human eyes.
To speak she thought — the imperfect note
Was chocked within her swelling throat,
Yet seemed in that low hollow groan
Her whole heart gushing in the tone. 345
It ceased — again she thought to speak,
Then burst her voice in one long shriek,
And to the earth she fell like stone

Or statue from its base o'erthrown,
More like a thing that ne'er had life, — 350
A monument of Azo's wife, —
Than her, that living guilty thing,
Whose every passion was a sting,
Which urged to guilt, but not could bear
That guilt's detection and despair. 355
But yet she lived — and all too soon
Recovered from that death-like swoon —
But scarce to reason — every sense
Had been o'erstrung by pangs intense;
And each frail fibre of her brain 360
(As bow-strings, when relaxed by rain,
The erring arrow launch aside)
Sent forth her thoughts all wild and wide —
The past a blank, the future black,
With glimpses of a dreary track, 365
Like lightning on the desert path,
When midnight storms are mustering wrath.
She feared — she felt that something ill
Lay on her soul, so deep and chill —
That there was sin and shame she knew; 370
That some one was to die — but who?
She had forgotten: — did she breathe?
Could this be still the earth beneath?
The sky above, and men around;

Or were they fiends who now so frowned 375
On one, before whose eyes each eye
Till then had smiled in sympathy?
All was confused and undefined
To her all-jarred and wandering mind;
A chaos of wild hopes and fears: 380
And now in laughter, now in tears,
But madly still in each extreme,
She strove with that convulsive dream;
For so it seemed on her to break:
Oh! vainly must she strive to wake! 385

XV.

The Convent bells are ringing,
But mournfully and slow;
In the grey square turret swinging,
With a deep sound, to and fro.
Heavily to the heart they go! 390
Hark! the hymn is singing —
The song for the dead below,
Or the living who shortly shall be so!
For a departing being's soul
The death-hymn peals and the hollow bells
knoll: 395
He is near his mortal goal;
Kneeling at the Friar's knee;

Sad to hear — and piteous to see —
Kneeling on the bare cold ground,
With the block before and the guards around — 400
And the headsman with his bare arm ready,
That the blow may be both swift and steady,
Feels if the axe be sharp and true —
Since he set its edge anew:
While the crowd in a speechless circle gather 405
To see the Son fall by the doom of the Father.

XVI.

It is a lovely hour as yet
Before the summer sun shall set,
Which rose upon that heavy day,
And mocked it with his steadiest ray; 410
And his evening beams are shed
Full on Hugo's fated head,
As his last confession pouring
To the monk, his doom deploring
In penitential holiness, 415
He bends to hear his accents bless
With absolution such as may
Wipe our mortal stains away.
That high sun on his head did glisten
As he there did bow and listen — 420
And the rings of chesnut hair

Curled half down his neck so bare;
But brighter still the beam was thrown
Upon the axe which near him shone
With a clear and ghastly glitter —
Oh! that parting hour was bitter! 425
Eve the stern stood chilled with awe:
Dark the crime, and just the law —
Yet they shuddered as they saw.

XVII.

The parting prayers are said and over
Of that false son — and daring lover! 430
His beads and sins are all recounted,
His hours to their last minute mounted —
His mantling cloak before was stripped,
His bright brown locks must now be clipped,
'Tis done — all closely are they shorn — 435
The vest which till this moment worn —
The scarf which Parisina gave —
Must not adorn him to the grave.
Even that must now be thrown aside,
And o'er his eyes the kerchief tied; 440
But no — that last indignity
Shall ne'er approach his haughty eye.
All feelings seemingly subdued,
In deep disdain were half renewed,

When headman's hands prepared to bind 445
Those eyes which would not brook such blind:
As if they dared not look on death.

"No — yours my forfeit blood and breath —

"These hands are chained — but let me die

"At least with an unshackled eye — 450

"Strike:" — and as the word he said,

Upon the block he bowed his head;

These the last accents Hugo spoke:

"Strike" — and flashing fell the stroke —

Rolled the head — and, gushing, sunk 455

Back the stained and heaving trunk,

In the dust, which each deep vein

Slaked with its ensanguined rain,

His eyes and lips a moment quiver;

Convulsed and quick — then fix for ever. 460

He died, as erring man should die,

Without display, without parade;

Meekly had he bowed and prayed,

As not disdaining priestly aid,

Nor desperate of all hope on high, 465

And while before the Prior kneeling,

His heart was weaned from earthly feeling;

His wrathful sire — his paramour —

What were they in such an hour?

No more reproch — no more despair; 470
No thought but heaven — no word but prayer —
Save the few which from him broke,
When, bared to meet the headman's stroke,
He claimed to die with eyes unbound,
His sole adieu to those around. 475

XVIII.

Still as the lips that closed in death,
Each gazer's bosom held his breath:
But yet, afar, from man to man,
A cold electric shiver ran,
As down the deadly blow descended — 480
On him whose life and love thus ended;
And with a hushing sound comprest,
A sigh shrunk back on every breast;
But no more thrilling noise rose there,
Beyond the blow that to the block — 485
Pierced through with forced and sullen shock,
Save one: — what cleaves the silent air
So madly shrill — so passing wild?
That, as a mother's o'er her child,
Done to death by sudden blow, 490
To the sky these accents go,
Like a soul's in endless woe.
Through Azo's palace-lattice driven,

That horrid voice ascends to heaven,
And every eye is turned thereon; 495
But sound and sight alike are gone!
It was a woman's shriek — and ne'er
In madlier accents rose despair;
And those who heard it, as it past,
In mercy wished it were the last. 500

XIX.

Hugo is fallen; and, from that hour,
No more in palace, hall, or bower,
Was Parisina heard or seen:
Her name — as if she ne'er had been —
Was banished from each lip and ear, 505
Like words of wantonness or fear;
And from Prince Azo's voice, by none
Was mention heard of wife or son;
No tomb — no memory had they.
Theirs was unconsecrated clay; 510
At least the knight's who died that day:
But Parisina's fate lies hid
Like dust beneath the coffin lid:
Whether in convent she abode,
And won to heaven her dreary road, 515
By blighted and remorseful years
Of scourge, and fast, and sleepless tears;

Or if she fell by bowl or steel,
For that dark love she dared to feel;
Or if, upon the moment smote, 520
She died by tortures less remote;
Like him she saw upon the block,
With heart that shared the headman's shock,
In quickened brokenness that came,
In pity, o'er her shattered frame, 525
None knew — and none can ever know:
But whatsoe'er its end below,
Her life began and closed in woe!

XX.

And Azo found another bride,
And goodly sons grew by his side; 530
But none so lovely and so brave
As him who withered in the grave;
Their growth but glanced unheeded by,
Or noticed with a smothered sigh. 535
But never tear his cheek descended,
And never smile his brow unbended;
And o'er that fair broad brow were wrought
The intersected lines of thought;
Those furrows which the burning share 540
Of Sorrow ploughs untimely there;
Scars of the lacerating mind

Which the Soul's war doth leave behind.
He was past all mirth or woe:
Nothing more remained below 545
But sleepless nights and heavy days,
A mind all dead to scorn or praise,
A heart which shunned itself — and yet
That would not yield — nor could forget,
Which when it least appeared to melt, 550
Intently thought — intensely felt:
The deepest ice which ever froze
Can only o'er the surface close —
The living stream lies quick below,
And flows — and cannot cease to flow. 555
Still was his sealed-up bosom haunted
By thoughts which Nature hath implanted;
Too deeply rooted thence to vanish,
Howe'er our stifled tears we banish;
When, struggling as they rise to start, 560
We check those waters of the heart,
They are not dried — those tears unshed
But flow back to the fountain head,
And resting in their spring more pure,
For ever in its depth endure, 565
Unseen, unwept, but uncongealed,
And cherished most where least revealed,
With inward starts of feeling left,

To throb o'er those of life bereft;
Without the power to fill again 570
The desert gap which made his pain;
Without the hope to meet them where
United souls shall gladness share,
With all the consciousness that he
Had only passed a just decree; 575
That they had wrought their doom of ill,
Yet Azo's age was wretched still.
The tainted branches of the tree,
If lopped with care, a strength may give,
By which the rest shall bloom and live 580
All greenly fresh and wildly free:
But if the lightning, in its wrath,
The waving boughs with fury scathe,
The massy trunk the ruin feels,
And never more a leaf reveals. 585

NOTES

NOTES.

The above copy of the book is a very good one, and is in the hands of the author. It is a very good copy, and is in the hands of the author. It is a very good copy, and is in the hands of the author.

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NOTES

N O T E S.

Note 1, page 65, line 14.

As twilight melts beneath the moon away.

The lines contained in Section I. were printed as set to music some time since; but belonged to the poem where they now appear, the greater part of which was composed prior to "Lara" and other compositions since published.

Note 2, page 75, line 21.

That should have won as haught a crest.

Haught — haughty — "Away *haught* man, thou art insulting me."

Shakspeare, Richard II.

P O E M S

P O E M S.

In the deep midnight of the night,
When all the world is fast asleep,<
I sit alone, and think of thee,
And how thy heart is full of love.

And when the sun is high and bright,
And all the world is full of light,
I sit alone, and think of thee,
And how thy heart is full of love.

T O E M

P O E M S.

To * * * * *

1.

WHEN all around grew drear and dark,
And reason half withheld her ray —
And hope but shed a dying spark
Which more misled my lonely way;

2.

In that deep midnight of the mind,
And that internal strife of heart,
When dreading to be deemed too kind,
The weak despair — the cold depart;

3.

When fortune changed — and love fled far,
And hatred's shafts flew thick and fast,
Thou wert the solitary star
Which rose and set not to the last.

4.

Oh! blest be thine unbroken light!

That watched me as a seraph's eye,
And stood between me and the night,
For ever shining sweetly nigh.

5.

And when the cloud upon us came,
Which strove to blacken o'er thy ray —
Then purer spread its gentle flame,
And dashed the darkness all away.

6.

Still may thy spirit dwell on mine,
And teach it what to brave or brook —
There's more in one soft word of thine,
Than in the world's defied rebuke.

7.

Thou stood'st, as stands a lovely tree,
That still unbroke, though gently bent,
Still waves with fond fidelity
Its boughs above a monument.

8.

The winds might rend — the skies might pour,
But there thou wert — and still wouldst be
Devoted in the stormiest hour
To sheed thy weeping leaves o'er me.

9.

But thou and thine shall know no blight,
Whatever fate on me may fall;
For heaven in sunshine will requite
The kind — and thee the most of all.

10.

Then let the ties of baffled love
Be broken — thine will never break;
Thy heart can feel — but will not move;
Thy soul, though soft, will never shake.

11.

And these, when all was lost beside,
Were found and still are fixed in thee —
And bearing still a breast so tried,
Earth is no desert — ev'n to me.

1.

BRIGHT be the place of thy soul!

No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control,
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.

On earth thou wert all but divine,

As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine,
When we know that thy God is with thee.

2.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!

May its verdure like emeralds be:
There should not be the shadow of gloom,
In aught that reminds us of thee.

Young flowers and an evergreen tree

May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But not cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

1.

WHEN we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

2.

The dew of the morning
Sunk chill on my brow —
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

3.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me —
Why wert thou so dear?
They know not I knew thee,
Who knew thee too well: —
Long, long shall I rue thee,
Too deeply to tell.

4.

In secret we met —
In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
After long years,
How should I greet thee? —
With silence and tears.

1808.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.*)

"O Lacrymarum fons, tenero sacros

"Ducentium ortus ex animo: quater

"Felix! in imo qui scatentem

"Pectore te, pia Nympha, sensit."

Gray's Poemata.

1.
THERE'S not a joy the world can give like that it
takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feel-
ing's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone,
which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone, ere youth
itself be past.

*) These Verses were given by Lord Byron to Mr. Power, Strand, who has published them, with very beautiful music by Sir John Stevenson.

2.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck
of happiness,
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of
excess:

The magnet of their course is gone, or only points
in vain

The shore to which their shiver'd sail shall never
stretch again.

3.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death
itself comes down;

It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream
its own;

That heavy-chill has frozen o'er the fountain of
our tears,

And tho' the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the
ice appears.

4.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth
distract the breast,

Through midnight hours that yield no more their
former hope of rest;

'Tis but as ivy - leaves around the ruin'd turret
wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and
grey beneath.

5.

Oh could I feel as I have felt, — or be what
I have been,
Or wept as I could once have wept, o'er many
a vanished scene:
As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brack-
ish though they be,
So midst the wither'd waste of life, those tears
would flow to me.

1815.

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

THERE be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmed ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming,

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

Alas! they had been friends in Youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above:
And Life is thorny; and youth is vain:
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain:

* * * * *

But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs, which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Coleridge's Christabel.

FARE THEE WELL!

FARE thee well! and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare *thee well*;
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.
Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again:
Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'Twas not well to spurn it so.
Though the world for this commend thee —
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe —
Though my many faults defaced me;
Could no other arm be found
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by Sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:
Still thine own its life retaineth —
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is — that we no more may meet.
These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widowed bed.
And when thou wouldst solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say "Father!"
Though his care she must forego?
When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is prest,
Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
'Think of him thy love had bless'd!
Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.
All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;

All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither — yet with *thee* they go,
Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee — by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:
But 'tis done — all words are idle —
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will. —
Fare thee well! — thus disunited,
Turn from every nearer tie,
Seared in heart, and lone, and blighted —
More than this I scarce can die.

O D E.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

I.

WE do not curse thee, Waterloo!
'Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 'twas shed, but is not sunk —
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the Water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion —
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost LABEDOYERE —
With that of him whose honoured grave
Contains the "bravest of the brave."
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 'tis full 'twill burts asunder —
Never yet was heard such thunder
As then shall shake the world with wonder —
Never yet was seen such lightning,
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!

Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.¹

II.

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanguishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Swayed not o'er his fellow men —
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son —
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell; — So perish all,
Who would men by man enthrall!

II.

And thou too of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n tomb;²
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,

Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing

On thy war-horse through the ranks,
Like a stream which burst its banks,
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,
Shone and shivered fast around thee —
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low
By a slave's dishonest blow?

Once — as the Moon sways o'er the tide,
It rolled in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight,
The soldier rais'd his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendancy, —
And, as it onward rolling rose,
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner

Of the eagle's burning crest —
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,
Who could then her wing arrest —

Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging
Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure was MURAT charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again!

IV.

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch —
But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice;
But, her hand on her sword,
Doubly shall she be adored;
France hath twice too well been taught
The "moral lesson" dearly bought —
Her Safety sits not on a throne,
With CAPET or NAPOLEON!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause —
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though Guilt would sweep it from the earth;
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;

Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter!

V.

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion —
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdu'd —
Man may die — the soul's renew'd:
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;
Millions breathe but to inherit
Her for ever bounding spirit —
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble —
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

"All wept, but particularly Savary, and a Polish officer who had been exalted from the ranks by Bonaparte. He clung to his master's knees: wrote a letter to Lord Keith, entreating permission to accompany him, even in the most menial capacity, which could not be admitted."

1.

MUST thou go, my glorious Chief,
Severed from thy faithful few?
Who can tell thy warrior's grief,
Maddening o'er that long adieu?
Woman's love, and friendship's zeal,
Dear as both have been to me —
What are they to all I feel,
With a soldier's faith for thee?

2.

Idol of the soldier's soul!
First in fight, but mightiest now:
Many could a world control;
Thee alone no doom can bow.

By thy side for years I dared
Death, and envied those who fell,
When their dying shout was heard,
Blessing him they served so well.⁵

3.

Would that I were cold with those,
Since this hour I live to see;
When the doubts of coward foes
Scarce dare trust a man with thee,
Dreading each should set thee free.
Oh! although in dungeons pent,
All their chains were light to me,
Gazing on thy soul unbent.

4.

Would the sycophants of him
Now so deaf to duty's prayer,
Were his borrowed glories dim,
In his native darkness share?
Were that world this hour his own,
All thou calmly dost resign,
Could he purchase with that throne
Hearts like those which still are thine?

5.

My chief, my king, my friend, adieu!

Never did I droop before;

Never to my sovereign sue,

As his foes I now implore.

All I ask is to divide

Every peril he must brave;

Sharing by the hero's side

His fall, his exile, and his grave.

ON THE STAR OF "THE LEGION OF
HONOUR."

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

1.

STAR of the brave! — whose beam hath shed
Such glory o'er the quick and dead —
Thou radiant and adored deceit!
Which millions rushed in arms to greet, —
Wild meteor of immortal birth!
Why rise in Heaven to set on Earth?

2.

Souls of slain heroes formed thy rays;
Eternity flashed through thy blaze;
The music of thy martial sphere
Was fame on high and honour here;
And thy light broke on human eyes,
Like a Volcano of the skies.

3.

Like lava rolled thy stream of blood,
And swept down empires with its flood;
Earth rocked beneath thee to her base,
As thou didst lighten through all space;
And the shorn Sun grew dim in air,
And set while thou wert dwelling there.

4.

Before thee rose, and with thee grew,
A rainbow of the loveliest hue
Of three bright colours, ⁴ each divine,
And fit for that celestial sign;
For Freedom's hand had blended them,
Like tints in an immortal gem.

5.

One tint was of the sunbeam's dyes;
One, the blue depth of Seraph's eyes;
One, the pure Spirit's veil of white
Had robed in radiance of its light:
The three so mingled did beseem
The texture of a heavenly dream.

6.

Star of the brave! thy ray is pale,
And darkness must again prevail!
But, oh thou Rainbow of the free!
Our tears and blood must flow for thee,
When thy bright promise fades away,
Our life is but a load of clay.

7.

And Freedom hallows with her tread
The silent cities of the dead;
For beautiful in death are they
Who proudly fall in her array;
And soon, oh Goddess! may we be
For evermore with them or thee!

NAPOLEON'S FAREWELL.

[FROM THE FRENCH.]

1.

FAREWELL to the Land, where the gloom of my
Glory

Arose and o'ershadowed the earth with her name —
She abandons me now, — but the page of her story,
The brightest or blackest, is filled with my fame.
I have warred with a world which vanquished me
only

When the meteor of Conquest allured me too far;
I have coped with the nations which dread me thus
lonely,

The last single Captive to millions in war!

2.

Farewell to thee, France! — when thy diadem
crowned me,

I made thee the gem and the wonder of earth, —
But thy weakness decrees I should leave as I found
thee,

Decayed in thy glory, and sunk in thy worth.

Oh! for the veteran hearts that were wasted
In strife with the storm, when their battles were
won —

Then the Eagle, whose gaze in that moment was
blasted,

Had still soared with eyes fixed on victory's sun!

3.

Farewell to thee, France! — but when Liberty
rallies

Once more in thy regions, remember me then —

The violet still grows in the depth of thy valleys;

Though withered, thy tears will unfold it again —

Yet, yet, I may baffle the hosts that surround us,

And yet may thy heart leap awake to my voice —

There are links which must break in the chain that
has bound us,

Then turn thee and call on the Chief of thy choice!

TO SAMUEL ROGERS, ESQ.

ABSENT or present, still to thee,
My friend, what magic spells belong!
As all can tell, who share, like me,
In turn thy converse, and thy song.
But when the dreaded hour shall come
By Friendship ever deemed too nigh,
And "MEMORY o'er her Druid's tomb
Shall weep that aught of thee can die,
How fondly will She then repay
Thy homage offered at her shrine,
And blend, while Ages roll away,
Her name immortally with thine!

April 19th, 1812.

MONODY ON THE DEATH OF THE RIGHT
HONOURABLE R. B. SHERIDAN.

Spoken at Drury Lane Theatre.

WHEN the last sunshine of expiring day
In summer's twilight weeps itself away,
Who hath not felt the softness of the hour
Sink on the heart, as dew along the flower?
With a pure feeling which absorbs and awes
While Nature makes that melancholy pause,
Her breathing moment on the bridge where Time
Of light and darkness forms an arch sublime,
Who hath not shared that calm so still and deep,
The voiceless thought which would not speak but
weep, 10
A holy concord — and a bright regret,
A glorious sympathy with suns that set?
'Tis not harsh sorrow — but a tenderer woe,
Nameless, but dear to gentle hearts below,
Felt without bitterness — but full and clear,
A sweet dejection — a transparent tear
Unmixed with worldly grief or selfish stain,
Shed without shame — and secret without pain.

Even as the tenderness that hour instils
When Summer's day declines along the hills, 20
So feels the fulness of our heart and eyes
When all of Genius which can perish dies.
A mighty Spirit is eclipsed — a Power
Hath passed from day to darkness — to whose hour
Of light no likeness is bequeathed — no name,
Focus at once of all the rays of Fame!
The flash of Wit — the bright Intelligence,
The beam of Song — the blaze of Eloquence,
Set with their Sun — but still have left behind
The enduring produce of immortal Mind; 30
Fruits of a genial morn, and glorious noon,
A deathless part of him who died too soon.
But small that portion of the wondrous whole,
These sparkling segments of that circling soul,
Which all embraced — and lightened over all,
To cheer — to pierce — to please — or to appal.
From the charmed council to the festive board,
Of human feelings the unbounded lord;
In whose acclaim the loftiest voices vied,
The praised — the proud — who made his praise
their pride. 40
5 When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan
Arose to Heaven in her appeal from man,
His was the thunder — his the avenging rod,

The wrath — the delegated voice of God!
Which shook the nations through his lips — and
blazed

Till vanquished senates trembled as they praised.

And here, oh! here, where yet all young and
warm

The gay creations of his spirit charm,

The matchless dialogue — the deathless wit,

Which knew not what it was to intermit; 50

The glowing portraits, fresh from life, that bring
Home to our hearts the truth from which they
spring;

These wondrous beings of his Fancy, wrought

To fulness by the fiat of his thought,

Here in their first abode you still may meet,

Bright with the hues of his Promethean heat;

A halo of the light of other days,

Which still the splendour of its orb betrays.

But should there be to whom the fatal blight

Of failing Wisdom yields a base delight, 60

Men who exult when minds of heavenly tone

Jar in the music which was born their own,

Still let them pause — Ah! little do they know

That what to them seemed Vice might be but Woe.

Hard is his fate on whom the public gaze
Is fixed for ever to detract or praise;
Repose denies her requiem to his name,
And Folly loves the martyrdom of Fame.
The secret enemy whose sleepless eye
Stands sentinel — accuser — judge — and spy, 70
The foe — the fool — the jealous — and the vain,
The envious who but breathe in others' pain,
Behold the host! delighting to deprave,
Who track the steps of Glory to the grave,
Watch every fault that daring Genius owes
Half to the ardour which its birth bestows,
Distort the truth, accumulate the lie,
And pile the Pyramid of Calumny!

These are his portion — but if joined to these
Gaunt Poverty should league with deep Disease, 80
If the high Spirit must forget to soar,
And stoop to strive with Misery at the door,
To soothe Indignity — and face to face
Meet sordid Rage — and wrestle with Disgrace,
To find in Hope but the renewed caress,
The serpent-fold of further Faithlessness, —
If such may be the Ills which men assail,
What marvel if at last the mightiest fail?
Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given

Bear hearts electric — charged with fire from
Heaven, 90
Black with the rude collision, inly torn,
By clouds surrounded, and on whirlwinds borne,
Driven o'er the lowering Atmosphere that nurst
Thoughts which have turned to thunder — scorch —
and burst.

But far from us and from our mimic scene
Such things should be — if such have ever been;
Our's be the gentler wish, the kinder task,
To give the tribute Glory need not ask,
To mourn the vanished beam — and add our mite
Of praise in payment of a long delight. 100

Ye Orators! whom yet our councils yield,
Mourn for the veteran Hero of your field!
The worthy rival of the wondrous *Three!*⁶
Whose words were sparks of Immortality!
Ye Bards! to whom the Drama's Muse is dear,
He was your Master — emulate him *here!*
Ye men of wit and social eloquence!
He was your brother — bear his ashes hence!
While Powers of Mind almost of boundless range,
Complete in kind — as various in their change, 110
While Eloquence — Wit — Poesy — and Mirth,
That humbler Harmonist of care on Earth,

Survive within our souls — while lives our sense
Of pride in Merit's proud pre-eminence,
Long shall we seek his likeness — long in vain,
And turn to all of him which may remain,
Sighing that Nature formed but one such man,
And broke the die — in moulding Sheridan!

N O T E S.

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NOTES

N O T E S.

Note 1, page 112, line 4.

Turning rivers into blood.

See Rev. chap. viii. verse 7, etc. "The first angel sounded, and there followed fire and hail mingled with blood etc."

Verse 8. "And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood etc."

Verse 10. "And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp; and it fell upon a third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters."

Verse 11. "And the name of the star is called *Worm-wood*: and the third part of the waters became *worm-wood*; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter."

Note 2, page 112, line 20.

Whose realm refused thee even a tomb.

Murat's remains are said to have been torn from the grave and burnt.

Note 3, page 117, line 4.

Blessing him they served so well.

"At Waterloo, one man was seen, whose left arm was shattered by a canon ball, to wrench it off with the other, and throwing it up in the air, exclaimed to his comrades, 'Vive l'Empereur, jusqu'à la mort.' There were many other instances of the like: this you may, however, depend on as true."

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Of three bright colours, each divine.

The tri-colour.

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When the loud cry of trampled Hindostan.

See Fox, Burke, and Pitt's eulogy on Mr. Sheridan's speech on the charges exhibited against Mr. Hastings in the House of Commons. Mr. Pitt entreated the House to adjourn, to give time for a calmer consideration of the question than could than occur after the immediate effect of that oration.

Note 6, page 129, line 14.

The worthy rival of the wondrous Three!

Fox — Pitt — Burke.

END OF THE FIFTH VOLUME.

C O N T E N T S

TO

VOLUME V.

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THE
WORKS
OF
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
L O R D B Y R O N.

WORKS

WORKS

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD RYON

WORKS

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THE

WORKS

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

L O R D B Y R O N.

VOL. VI.

*PRISONER OF CHILLON — MANFRED —
LAMENT OF TASSO etc.*

LEIPSICK,

PRINTED FOR GERARD FLEISCHER THE YOUNGER.

1818.

(28)

WORKS

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD BURNES

VOL. VI

REMARKS ON THE
STATE OF THE

LEIPZIG

PRINTED FOR CHAS. BURNES

1813

THE

PRISONER OF CHILLON etc.

THE

PRISONER OF CHILTON &c.

SONNET ON CHILLON.

ETERNAL spirit of the chainless mind!

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,

For there thy habitation is the heart —

The heart which love of thee alone can bind;

And when thy sons to fetters are consigned —

To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,

Their country conquers with their martyrdom,

And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar — for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE
PRISONER OF CHILLON.

A FABLE.

I.

My hair is grey, but not with years,

Nor grew it white

In a single night,²

As men's have grown from sudden fears:

My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,

But rusted with a vile repose,

For they have been a dungeon's spoil,

And mine has been the fate of those

To whom the goodly earth and air

Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare; 10

But this was for my father's faith

I suffered chains and courted death;

That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven — who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Prond of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd;
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II.

There are seven pillars of gothic mold,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,

And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away, 40
'Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III.

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone,
We could not move a single pace, 50
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight;
And thus together — yet apart,
Gettered in hand, but pined in heart;
'Twas still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each,
With some new hope, or legend old, 60

Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon-stone,
A grating sound — not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy — but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV.

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest 70
I ought to do — and did my best —
And each did well in his degree.
'The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him — with eyes as blue as heaven,
For him my soul was sorely moved,
And truly might it be distress
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day —
(When day was beautiful to me 80
As to young eagles, being free) —
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer a long light,

The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe 90
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V.

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank

With joy: — but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank,

I saw it silently decline —

And so perchance in sooth did mine; 100
But yet I forc'd it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.

He was a hunter of the hills,

Had followed there the deer and wolf;

To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI.

Lake Lemman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent 110
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,⁵

Which round about the wave enthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high 120
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII.

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loath'd and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,

For we were used to hunter's fare, 1130
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den:
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mold 140
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead,
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died — and they unlocked his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave 150
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,

That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer —
'They coldly laugh'd — and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above 160
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII.

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be 170
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood: —
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,

I've seen it on the breaking ocean 180
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors — this was woe.
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom 190
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray —
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur — not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost 200
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear —

I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I called, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound, 210
And rush'd to him: — I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived — I only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last — the sole — the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe: 220
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.

I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope — but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death. 230

IX.

What next befell me then and there
I know not well — I never knew —
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling — none —
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
It was not night — it was not day, 240
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness — without a place;
There were no stars — no earth — no time —
No check — no change — no good — no crime —
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless! 250

X.

A light broke in upon my brain, —
It was the carol of a bird;

It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track, 260
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me! 270
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.

I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine, 280
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paràdise;
For — Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal — well I knew, 290
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone, —
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
Lone — as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI.

A kind of change came in my fate, 300
My keepers grew compassionate,
I know not what had made them so,

They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was: — my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one, 310
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII.

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all, 320
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child — no sire — no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,

For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was carious to ascend
'To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high, 330
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII.

I saw them — and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down; 340
And then there was a little isle,⁴
Which in my very face did smile,

The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue. 350

The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled — and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode 360
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,
And yet my glance, too much opprest,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV.

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count — I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free, 370
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.

And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home: 380
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell —
My very chains and I grew friends
So much a long communion tends 390
To make us what we are: — even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

S O N N E T.

ROUSSEAU — Voltaire — our Gibbon — and de
Staël —

'Leman! these names are worthy of thy shore,
'Thy shore of names like these, wert thou no
more,

Their memory thy remembrance would recall:
To them thy banks were lovely as to all,
But they have made them lovelier, for the lore
Of mighty minds doth hallow in the core
Of human hearts the ruin of a wall

Where dwelt the wise and wondrous; but by *thee*
How much more, Lake of Beauty! do we feel,
In sweetly gliding o'er thy crystal sea,
The wild glow of that not ungentle zeal,
Which of the heirs of immortality
Is proud, and makes the breath of glory real!

STANZAS TO —.

I.

THOUGH the day of my destiny's over,
 And the star of my fate hath declined,
 Thy soft heart refused to discover
 The faults which so many could find;
 Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted,
 It shrunk not to share it with me,
 And the love which my spirit hath painted
 It never hath found but in *thee*.

II.

THEN when nature around me is smiling
 The last smile which answers to mine,
 I do not believe it beguiling
 Because it reminds me of thine;
 And when winds are at war with the ocean,
 As the breasts I believed in with me,
 If their billows excite an emotion,
 It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar — for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

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PRISONER OF CHILLON.

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Nor grew it white
In a single night,²

As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;

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Byron, George Gordon Byron

The works of the right honourable Lord Byron

Bd.: 5

Leipsick 1818

P.o.angl. 53 b-5/6

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10745355-6